

Spring 2014

Pathos, Spring 2014

Portland State University. Student Publications Board

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A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the Spring/Summer 2014 issue of Pathos! After some turmoil which involved a delay in our winter issue and a change in management, we discovered during week six of spring quarter that a problem with our online submissions manager had been causing submissions we had received as far back as fall 2013 to remain archived and unreviewed on our website. This means that the fall 2013 and winter 2014 issues were released without us having fairly reviewed all the submissions we received. Instead of assigning blame (though there is definitely blame to be assigned) I would like to issue an apology to those who submitted this past year, and to let it be known that the issue has been resolved and won't happen again.

Many of the pieces included in the issue you now hold were originally submitted to us as long ago as last fall. Out of fairness we have tried to include as many works from as many different artists as possible, prioritizing those who didn't have a chance for their work to appear in either fall 2013 or winter 2014.

I would like to extend great thanks to Coordinator of Student Media Reaz Mahmood and Student Media Accountant Sheri Pitcher for all of their help in navigating the last-minute troubles we've experienced with budgeting and the complex SALP bureaucracy. I would also like to welcome next year's editor-in-chief, Brooke Horn, who will be taking over in the fall and who has generously given her time and effort to help us put this issue together.

-RYAN DE LAOREAL

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errata from winter 2014:

The authorship of the piece "The McCoughlin Group" from the previous edition of Pathos was listed in error. The author should have been listed as Simon Alexander Diamond.

on the cover:

"Eye Candy" by Carrie Clore

SHELLS

By Thea Prieto

“Dad, what are you doing?”

Your father does not acknowledge you, but continues walking down the dirt driveway with heavy buckets hanging from his hands. The buckets are filled with all the walnuts you picked the day before. His straw hat has fallen on the wet ground, and his untied work boots do not mark a straight line. The morning light is still low and cold, and your father has not slept.

Your mother, afraid, woke you fifteen minutes ago in the dark, and because you are the first-born son visiting for the weekend, you agreed to find your father. You shiver in muddy slippers and thin flannel.

“Dad, let’s go back inside the house and have some breakfast.”

There is no wind. The winter fog saturates the surrounding fir trees, and large, individual drops bang loudly on your father’s tin workshop. You see your father’s shoulders bend from lack of sleep, but his boots continue lifting from the mud with a sticking sound, proceeding towards the field of rusted machinery in back of his workshop. You carried one bucket at a time in a wheelbarrow—they were so heavy—but he carries both at once without resting them on the ground. Even though you are old enough now to work long hours of your own and pay all your expenses by yourself, your father is still much larger and stronger than you.

“Dad, you haven’t slept and it’s Sunday. Maybe you can take it easy today?”

Your father stumbles slightly when he reaches the back field, and you realize something is very wrong. Your stom-

ach pools with the anxious acid reserved for family troubles, but like your father, you trudge on. Your fear urges frustration towards your father, because you only recently learned about the sleeping aids. The day before—when your father was still speaking and you canceled a week of work to rush home—he told you he only slept an hour each night.

“One night last month, I slept for two full hours,” your father said over the phone, “and it was like God kissed me.”

Three months without sleep, and not one word to you or your younger sisters. Your father told your mother not to trouble you with his doctor visits and his sleeping pills that did not work. He also did not want to worry you with his lagging work and the red bills he knew his children would feel tempted to pay. With his sleep gone also failing is his ability to speak. How many times have you called home in the last three months? How much of your father’s health have you taken for granted over the phone? Your sisters have also canceled work and informed their teachers. They have come home as well.

It is exactly this kind of reaction your father wanted to avoid, everyone assuring themselves if he gets some sleep, his speech, his coordination; it will all come back. You pray it comes back. There are so many stories about birds, mushrooms, and clouds he has not yet told you, so many half-completed projects and dreams around the house. Your father’s shop has many familiar shelves with many unfamiliar tools which now, in his silence, overwhelm you with their multitude and mystery. You father takes pride in his accumulated equipment, in the metal he welds and the

houses he builds, and you enjoy following along because there is always something your father knows that you do not.

But now your father is dumping all the walnuts you picked yesterday into—of all things—a six foot cement mixer and attempting to connect the manual wheel-crank.

“Dad.” You turn your eyes to the sky. “What are you doing?”

It is an awful thing to begin distrusting your father’s capabilities. Some people never have this trust. Some people, on the other hand, never have any doubts. Some people begin taking care of their parents at a much earlier or older age than you, but right now, in the back field, this the first time you ever wonder if your father can keep up. The tightness begins in your chest, and then spreads painfully up your throat. Your knees lock, but you want to run. He cannot do this anymore, you think, he cannot continue to live like this.

Your father has managed to connect the wheel-crank to the cement mixer. He begins to laboriously crank and roll the walnuts around in the empty drum, and a thousand different cracking sounds fill the surrounding woods. The walnuts are being demolished and the mixer spits out both the smooth-green and the dried-black husks that enclose the nut. Some broken shells are ejected out as well. A black dust covers your father’s already dirty T-shirt and his bare head and arms. You wonder how you can tactfully divert your father from the mixer before all the nuts are ruined,

but you are shaking. You do not want to shame your father, but you have to take the wheel. If your father fails—you understand with crushing responsibility—your family will turn to you.

“Dad, you don’t know what you’re doing.”

At breakfast you convince your mother and your sisters that your father should go back to the doctor. Your family insists, and your father acquiesces. The next day, the doctors conduct further tests and conclude that your father has a degenerative and irreversible brain disease, and he has three months left to live. It only ends up being three weeks, only two weeks until your father’s face holds no recognition of your face or your voice, but your mind grips onto the day before the diagnosis. You memory hardens over the day with the walnuts, when your father stopped the cement mixer and you looked into the mixing drum. Resting on top of all the shattered, suddenly extraneous pulp were all the shining walnut seeds, edible gold, an entire batch of shelled walnuts waiting to be gathered.

You remember your father leaning into the mixing drum to scoop, and wordless, with his large, dirt-worked construction hands outstretched, showing you two spilling handfuls of shelled walnuts. Your father still did not say anything, but he was smiling, proud of his innovation, his kale-green eyes fully present with your kale-green eyes. Some of the nutmeats had even been shelled whole without breaking, perfect and intact. Flawless, fresh, and new.

I AM HERE FOR YOU

By Grant Howard

Crickets continued clapping while a train prattled on,
on its way out of here,
miles away.
Just like it did the town before ours yesterday.

Like the smell of her mixed up perfume samples,
that had left hours ago,
trailing down the street,
towards the bargain beer house.

She falls through the door,
face first, onto the floor.
Spilt whore all over the place.

The money we had for rent
is now neatly parked in a wooden register.
Jefferson kissing Jefferson
at a bar down the street
where men like to fist fight after work.
The beer comes out of her and threatens to bend down the
unfinished hardwood floors.
I offer her head to the spaghetti pot.
“Shhh, it is okay baby...” I say as fingers of sun light come
through the blinds.

The birds chirp from a diseased plum tree
that sits outside
in its last bloom.

She moans out of her head cave
a bad smelling groan—the sound
an old ship makes when it is
lost to heaving seas—
rudderless and without compass.
I kiss her on the forehead like lighthouses do
the drowning.

She wouldn't be here dry.

So I wait here on the shore,
waving and smiling at her,
because
every night I get to feel as heroes do.

Don't worry honey...I am always here for me.

Sol INVICTUS

By Chad White

Carl was lying on the ground in his front yard and staring at the sky. Most of his neighbors had gone, save for a few that didn't have family elsewhere. His neighbor stepped onto Carl's front yard and for a moment joined Carl in looking at the sky.

"Beautiful day, isn't it?"

"Aren't they all," said Carl with sigh.

"Hard to believe what's happening is real."

"I guess so."

The sky flickered and shuttered, blinking like a broken TV. It wasn't unusual to see the sky blinking these days. It was only a matter of time before the whole thing shut down they said. Still, it was hard for Carl to get used to it, the idea of a real doomsday. Once the sky darkened the world would slowly become a frozen wasteland. Many people went insane, rioting or giving themselves up to prayer and others just stopped working and prepared for the inevitable. It had been two weeks since the sun first cracked.

The bus pulled up to the curb and opened its doors to allow the passengers on. Carl waited for the elderly lady in front him to hobble into the bus. He sat behind her and anticipated the same conversation her and the other two ladies had every day. They all talked about the utility of their walkers, but it wasn't really a conversation. They cut each other off and generally just talked about themselves and over themselves. A woman sitting next to Carl laughed. The sky blinked briefly and no one seemed to notice. It had been two years since the sun first cracked.

The news reported the completion of living facilities completely heated and powered by geothermal energy. People with money put up bids to get into these exclusive living areas. Carl asked his wife if they should put a bid in to get into one. She rubbed his shoulders and told him it would be a waste of time and their current bills took priority. He reached up and held her hands gently and agreed with her. It had been five years since the sun first cracked.

Carl held his son in his arms and cried. His wife smiled at him with a red face. They talked about what to name him, it was difficult choice. They took him home and it took two weeks to decide. They named him Colton after Carl's grandfather. Scientists were coming to a consensus about why the sky was blinking. The Earth was wrapped in a sufficiently advanced sphere that prevented detection up until it started to break down. It had been eight years since the sun first cracked.

Colton watched his father preparing breakfast. His mother sat beside him. The light outside the window flickered and disappeared. It was out for fifteen minutes before it returned. Breakfast was served and the TV was turned to the news. Probes had been sent toward the crack in the sun. No signal returned after they had passed through. Announcement of an international project to send a manned spaced vehicle appeared on all channels. It had been sixteen years since the sun first cracked.

Carl hugged his son for what could be the last time. His wife wept beside them. Colton had joined the crew of the Sol Invictus and was due to head into orbit. He waved to his

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family one last time before getting into the car that would take him to the launch center. Colton watched them until they disappeared into the horizon. The man beside him clasped him on the shoulder and nodded. Colton nodded back. The Sol Invictus was the largest undertaking ever attempted by man. It had been thirty-three years since the sun first cracked.

Colton looked out the window of the Sol Invictus, nothing could be seen. It had been two days since the stars disappeared. Reports of rioting and mass panic flooded into their info screens. The sun wasn't far off now, but only their instruments told them so. This was the best possible scenario for the Sol Invictus, no sun meant no heat and an easy pass through the crack. It was the worst possible scenario for those left on Earth. It had been seven months since the Sol Invictus had departed.

Visible light could be seen where the sun used to be. It was impossible to tell what was generating it. Reports from Earth had quieted down as the earth cooled to below freezing. Geothermal colonies had been set up and Colton's

family was safe. The majority of the world was not so lucky. Not long now and they would cross the threshold. It had been one month since the heavens shut-off.

The Sol Invictus passed through the crack. A massive star several hundred times larger than the sun stood in the center of thousands of spheres. Communications from Earth were cut off after passing through the hole. Communications from something else were being received.

"Hello, identify yourselves."

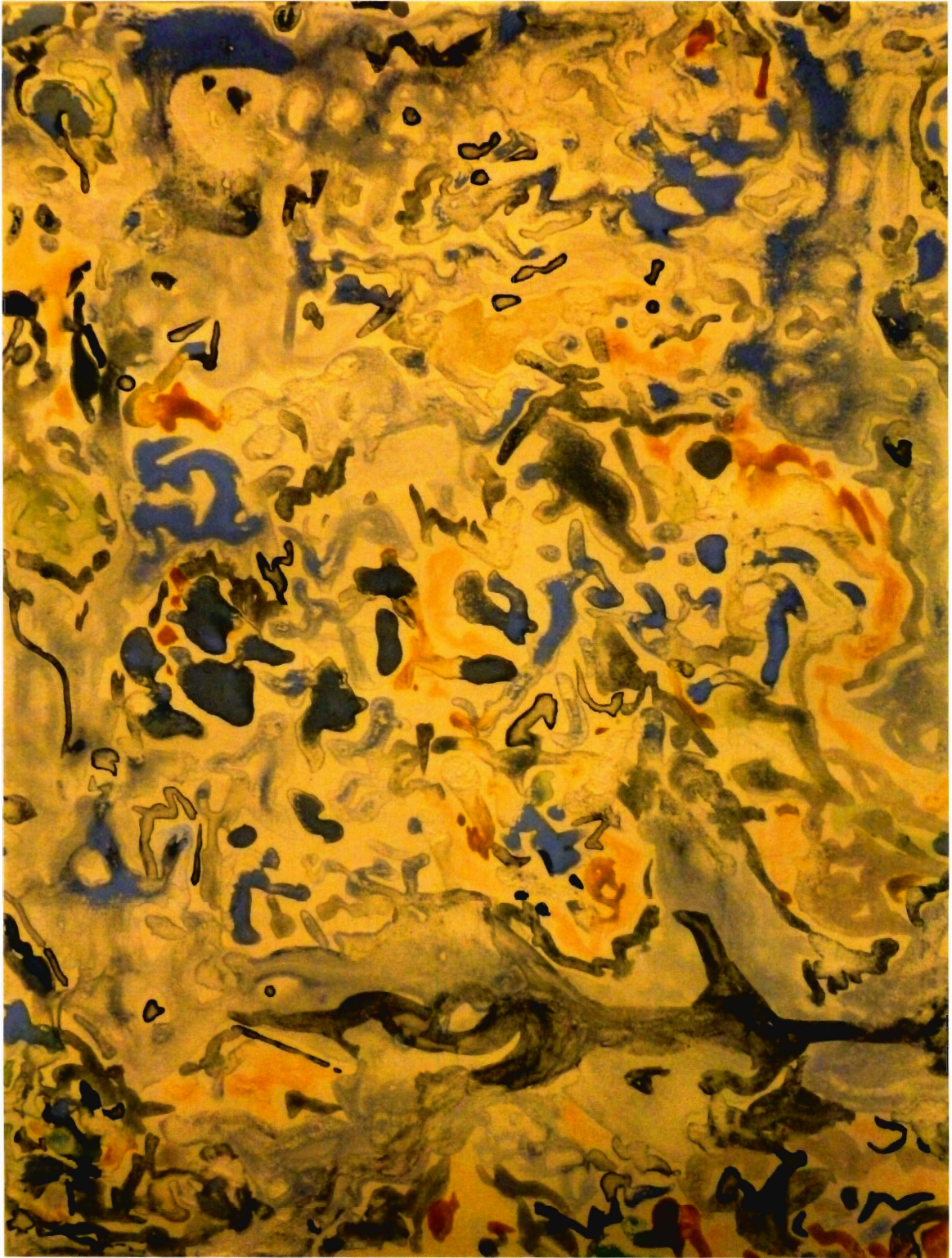
Colton looked around at the rest of the crew. Everyone was as surprised as he was to hear a familiar language. He put on a headset and replied, "This is the Sol Invictus, from Earth."

"Another Sol Invictus, guess the human race can't come up with anything original, we're also the Sol Invictus."

"What do you mean?"

"There are others with the same name and some without. Seems like we're variations in an experiment; of who's we don't know," the man said quietly. "But, we certainly aren't alone in our plight."

opposite:
UNTITLED
By Carrie Clore



LOGGING COUNTRY

By Stephanie Tshappat

Virginia seems to have a collection of “if onlys.”
(If only Daddy’s doctors had noticed the cancer signs earlier...)

(If only she didn’t have to go to her soul sucking job today...)

(If only she didn’t live in this hell hole of a town...)

She doesn’t understand people who say they have no regrets. Is that possible? Isn’t there any decision they wish they never made? Occurrences in their past they grieve over like a death, wishing they could change?

She hears Mama’s words from their last conversation; they echo the same disappointment her mother always had in her father.

(If only Mama understood her...)

Stretching, Virginia gets up from the worn leather recliner she’d insisted on inheriting; it was Daddy’s favorite, broken springs and all. Going into the kitchen, she tops off her coffee, adds a little creamer and Kahlua, and sees the TO DO list she scrawled out at work waiting on the counter. Unceremoniously, she throws it in the trash.

Her therapist says she bulldozes over her feelings, not allowing herself to fully feel anything. It keeps me safe, is Virginia’s response. You’re only going through the motions of your life, you’re not really living your life, her therapist always replies, which is true. Every time Virginia takes steps to plan her future, she feels stalled. She doesn’t want to feel—yet she’s tired of numbness.

Which is worse? The numbness or the pain?

She’s had her share of pain and doesn’t think it’s all that great. She’s heard people say, if it hurts, you know you can feel. What good is feeling when the things you love the most are snatched right out of your life? Virginia thinks, staring vacantly out the window over the sink, taking in the wasted desert hills, the brown of the farmers’ empty fields. What good is feeling when someone you pour your heart and soul into turns their back on you?

(If only Jay hadn’t left...)

What good is pain?

She’s believed all her life God doesn’t give you anything you can’t handle; what doesn’t kill you makes you stronger. But Virginia and God are no longer on good terms, and what hadn’t killed Virginia left her weak and gaunt, wane—there are many days she wishes her heartbreak would kill her.

Virginia wishes someone had told her about broken hearts. She’s always believed people died of broken hearts and imagined there was emotional pain that went along with it. Nothing had prepared her for the acute physical aching in her chest the day Daddy died. She knew her heart was broken. A year later and it’s still hard to breathe, she can’t sleep without alcohol or sleeping pills—it doesn’t matter which, as long as the pain is abated, and with it, the memories of Daddy lying in that hospital bed.

Virginia opens the window to a bleak fall day, a grey overcast sky stretching into infinity. She itches for a cigarette. She’d grown up hating smoking, wishing Daddy would quit, terrified it would kill him. He tried to quit, so many

times, and no matter how many times he couldn't quit, he never stopped trying. His refusal to give up was something Virginia admired to no end, although Mama saw only failure and her own disappointment.

Ironic that liver cancer took Daddy, and not lung cancer or emphysema. Shortly after he passed away, Virginia bought her first pack of Marlboro Reds, smoking simply because she missed the smell. She only smokes outside, because she hates the way the stale odor clings to her hair and clothes, but it's one more thing that makes Daddy feel closer.

She sighs. If only.



A year? She thinks as she drives south, gripping the Jeep's steering wheel with shaking hands. Next month would be a year? A year—she's still stuck in Pendleton, working the same meaningless job she's been stuck at for five years. Daddy, she thinks, do I disappoint you? How can I be making you proud, stuck in that fucking cubicle every day?

She sees the trees, then the sign for Battle Mountain, and she wipes the tears and snot away from her eyes and nose with the back of her hand, leaning forward in the driver's seat to get the first glimpse. Slows for the curve, down shifting the Jeep to accommodate. Almost there. Virginia is crying but smiling now through her tears—almost there,

she thinks again. She feels the grief and sadness lifting from her shoulders, and she breathes easy for the first time in months. She sees Daddy, complete with angel's wings, taking her torment from her.

"Thank you, Daddy," Virginia whispers, sighing as she crests the mountain, more for the beautiful vista spread out below her than for the release of her grief.

Through the tiny town of Ukiah, then back up into the mountains, into what had been logging country. Daddy worked these trails and roads when she was small, and had loved being surrounded by the beauty of the mountains. She turns the Jeep onto the old logging track and parks, leaping out and heading west through the brush and pine trees. She finds the tree, a "D" carved in the bark, marking the spot where they had spread and buried Daddy's ashes. She sees the old coil of logging cable on top of the burial site, the cross made of sticks on top of the cable. Everything was as they left it.

Virginia sinks to her knees, her hand on the trunk of the tree.

"I miss you Daddy." She looks up at the sky, hoping he hears her. "The hurt never goes away. I don't know what to do. I miss you so much. Nothing is the same."

A slight breeze sighs through the pines, lifts the ends of her hair. Her shoulders shake with sobs.

"Happy birthday, Daddy."

"IN" CULTURE

By Heidi Sellick

Distress at best I couldn't catch my breath
 "Adorn" "Miguel" "Game of" "Thrones" "Drones"
 "Who make our breakfast in the morning"
 I'm mourning.
 "Harlem" "Shake" "Waco" "Texas again" "Habitable
 planets" "Kepler" "Doctor" "Who" "Boston"
 "Marathon" "Did you hear there was a" "bomb"
 I feel the blast.
 "Anne Frank" "A Beibliever" "LucasArts" "Disney"
 "Gay" "Marriage" "Fifty Shades" "of Grey"
 "Hobbit"
 "Got it!"
 "Thorin Oakenshield."
 "Dang it."
 "Come again?"
 "Never mind."
 "You're wasting my time."
 And you, mine.

Tide

By Maya Brown

I watched
 Her woozy spinning wheel slack tongue
 spin its last string,
 Her tangerine powder urine
 stain the sheets below.
 I watched
 Her moist slug tail lips
 salt and dry to a crisp,
 Her night shade fists
 shrivel to jaundiced fall acorns.
 I watched
 Her mother belly bloat like a sponge,
 as her daughter spilt cigarette kisses and
 black velvet tears.
 I watched
 Her sea sunk eyes
 wander in twisted sleep,
 The grey tides of her breath rise and fall
 rise
 fall
 and stop.

MARIGOLDS IN THE CLAY

By Jazmine Mira Rosier

NOVEMBER

My first train in India is blue. Old blue paint coats the outside, there are blue benches to sit on, a collection of blue fans on a tin blue ceiling, and blue bars separating me from the rest of India outside my blue window. A woman with a sweet smile, a bindi, and a blue sari sits across from me. The light seeping in from outside even seems to be carrying a bit of indigo as it slips down onto the seat beside me.

Molly and I have been in India for two weeks now. The days staying in the little village of Bardoli with the Indian family she worked for in the States are a blur to me now. Images of sugarcane fields, small Hindu temples, and old Indian women and men move around quickly in my mind, so much so that I feel physically dizzy in moments of recollection.

Now we're leaving American Bob behind and heading to Udaipur, the city where we will live and work for the next few months. We arrived to the train station early this morning. There were blankets outstretched throughout the station so we had to avoid stepping on sleeping bodies as we headed to our platform. While we waited for our train saris of various colors passed us by. The jingling of anklets was rhythmic with bare feet running to catch trains, so that the whole station echoed a subtle metallic melody. Men with mangled ankles or missing arms roamed around without purpose. One of these mangled men, who was missing an eye, sat close to Molly and I. He stared at us with his

remaining eye, it's big and brown gaze unwavering. Puppies sprinted by, dirty and lost. I wondered where they were hurrying to. A family of beggars sat next to us on a tattered blanket and held an old instant coffee cardboard box that contained two little blue birds inside. Their daughter ran up to us coughing, asking for food. There was a violence in her voice, like she was trying to spit the words out, trying to flush them out of her little body like poison. I gave her my orange, which she grabbed, hid beneath her shawl, and ran to beg from another group of tourists.

There are days when I have a hard time finding my footing here. Sometimes I don't know where to look or how to feel. There are moments I feel so unsure of absolutely everything that I can't even be sure that the ground beneath my feet is solid. I suppose whoever first combined oxygen and nitrogen had to have learned the adversity in heat.

My first train in India is thirteen hours long. Udaipur is known as The White City because the buildings are all made of marble. Maharana Udai Singh, Udaipur's founder, must have really fancied the stone. Legend has it that in 1559 AD this man with marble on his mind came across a holy sage praying on a hill overlooking a lake. The holy man blessed him and told him to build a city there, as it would thrive from the nourishment of the lake. It is 2013 now, so I suppose the sage had made a valid projection. In pictures I've seen the lake the sage had referred to, which has now provided sustenance to the city for 454 years. The reflections of white from the marbled buildings cascades boldly into the blue, the contrast making the cobalt even more

stark. And isn't it interesting that our blood is blue before oxygen hits it?

DECEMBER

Today when we were walking from our house to the garden where we've been working for the past few weeks we ran into five donkeys carrying goods, a herd of cows so very large we had no other choice but to conclude that each and every one was pregnant, three begging children, a young girl who spoke English to us through a window covered in vines, countless saris of countless colors, piles of trash, (streams of trash, stairways of trash, houses of trash), four rambunctious boys on one motorcycle, and an unfathomable variety of animal poop. The walk to the garden is less than five minutes from our house. It's December 25th today so on the walk Molly and I hummed Christmas carols in an effort to conjure some sort of essence of home or normalcy. A man in a turban passed us as we walked, "Namaste, wish you a very very happy happy Christmas" slipped out from his smile.

Time seems so unfathomable here. The moon was just a fingernail when I came to India and it's nearly full now. I haven't slept in nearly four days. Every time I close my eyes my mind is given the opportunity to process everything I've been seeing here. There is always so much stimulation in wakefulness that it is in dreams that I am given the space to respond to this new reality. In them there are stray dogs, most of which look like they're dying. There are children begging for food and mothers carrying babies they can't feed. At the orphanage where I'll start working next week, there is a five-year-old little girl named Manju who is HIV positive. She comes to me in dreams even though I haven't met her yet. Also, we didn't have water at our house for three days last week so we couldn't cook, go to the bathroom, or shower. The toilet at my house is a squat and our shower is a bucket. These things are fleeting though. I'd rather take cold showers from a bucket for the rest of my life than do nothing to change this kind of poverty. I just need to remember that smiles are like little oyster shells opening, revealing pearls inside. I need to remember beauty when it lacks, to find the marigolds in the clay.

The sun is tucking into bed now, pulling a velvet blanket above her golden curls. The lack of mountains or big buildings here lends a huge canvas to the sky, with the only obstruction to the horizon line funny looking palm tree branches. These mango-lit Indian sunsets look as if they span on forever, as if it must be sunset everywhere in the world. I wonder what the sunset back home looked like today. Likely, it was hidden beneath rain clouds. Here the sunset seems to drip down the hills. I imagine sucking up its golden pulp with a straw.

JANUARY

The moon finally filled up, we watched her brazenly rise over the peaks that surround Pushkar, the holy city we visited this weekend. We watched, wide-eyed as the moon's reflection rose in the ripples of Pushkar's holy lake, her watery imposter as round and relentless as the original. Under her orange belly we drank mango milkshakes. As I sipped up what looked like moon milk, I watched the drama unfold before me in these two scenes—the moon reflected in the ripples of religion. It is this duality of existence, the harshness of truth filtered through murky holiness; it is through these two forces that India finds identity. The realness of poverty, of dirty faced children, dying dogs, trash filled rivers, the realness of hungry mothers, it is all filtered through religion. In that way, holiness obscures and redefines all of the awfulness here. In a world where everything is outlined by the divine, where everything is protected by the beliefs bound in books, beliefs held in the ripples of various holy lakes, the difficulties often get excused. I'm on the five-hour train back to our house in Udaipur now. There are two sets of worn hands and toothless mouths at my train window. There is a boy cleaning the train aisles with his sweatshirt. He has dust on his

Opposite:
MANHATTAN BEACH
By So Tauch



face and a bug in his hair. If truth has strayed too far from loveliness, what are we supposed to do?

FEBRUARY

We saw his body. We saw his body in the road and we saw his motorcycle flipped over and the whole thing looked so lifeless and still. Our driver pulled over and quickly ran into that lifeless scene. Young boys ran there too, they passed my window as I sat in the backseat of the car. There was a crowd of people surrounding him so that his body was no longer visible and the lifelessness was interrupted with so much movement—people running and worrying. Someone was asking something from the front seat of our car but I couldn't seem to hear what or who it was. I saw them drag his body off the road, I saw the way it was limp and heavy and lifeless in their hands. Tal, the Israeli girl sitting in the front seat of our taxi, asked again and this time I heard, what happened? She was sleeping and had been jolted awake. I quietly answered, "I don't think he's alive." The words slipped out of my lips and I tried my hardest to swallow them back in after letting them out, as if not saying it aloud could negate the reality. I needed to suck those words back in because they were too powerful to be true. Molly, who was sitting beside me, held my head to hers and my hand was over my mouth even though I didn't remember putting it there. We sat in the silence of my sucked up words.

People were still running to the scene when our driver came back to the car. He sat down and started the engine and I don't remember who asked it but "is he okay?" filled the silence. The driver stretched around to look at us and he was silent, too, but only because he was looking for English. Whoever it was asked again and he looked at us with disinterest and nodded his head quickly with "no, dead" then he turned back around and began to drive. The aloofness in his voice as he pierced my silence, my fragile quiet of negated words, shot through the air unrestrained. The causality of his intonation made the weight the words even more forceful, their violence left raw, unfiltered by tenderness. When he spoke the red of his teeth from beetle-nut leaf tobacco dripped like blood. I was so angry with him for not realiz-

ing the gravity of death. I was so angry with him that death was so normal here. And now I'm thinking of the red of the pool of blood next to the dead puppy I saw in the road yesterday. And I'm thinking of the red of the statues of Gods and Goddesses in temples. Red of saffron, of roses floating in the river Ganges, red of bindis, red of chili powder. Red of pomegranate, paprika and clay.

MARCH

"Sometimes I go to a tree on the hillside to write. I think we have a connection, me and that tree. These are your best friends, nature. They always give and ask for nothing in return." An Indian man named Rizwan told me this one day as we sat on a rooftop above Udaipur and it made me think of everyone back home. I wish they could all be here with me and together we could wander through these alleyways of marigolds and marble I keep losing myself in. I'd take them to my most favorite rooftop terrace and we could sip on chai and watch the sun get sleepy over the city. For now, I'll keep finding ways to keep them here with me through the little treasures I find that make me think of home. Right now it's 4:30pm in India and 3:00am in Oregon. I'm sure that everyone is well into dreams by now, but somehow, subtly, it's like they're all here with me too.

This weekend we went to visit the Golden Temple in Amritsar. It is one of the loveliest, most humbling places we've visited in India. Unlike the masses of camera-equipped tourists at the Taj Mahal, the square that surrounds the temple is filled with Sikh devotees. They are either on their hands and knees, bowing down, or standing at the edge of the water, hands pressed together and held up to their foreheads. Scriptures and chanting fill the air, broadcasted from various loudspeakers. Everything, except for the golden temple and the praying people, is white marble. The people look like spilled paints; red and purple turbans, blue, yellow and green saris move smoothly like liquid over the marble.

More than once, I catch my toes close to the hands of a bowing woman. I shuffle through the space, trying my best not to step on anyone. There are koi fish in the water that surrounds the temple. A man in a white cloth and an azure blue turban stands waist deep and corrals them with a stick.

Near to him, more men bathe in the water, wearing white pants and bright turbans. We move around the temple like ghosts, gliding over the marble, careful not to disturb anything. Time seems to stand still.

Rewinding 24 hours to the journey to Amritsar, we're on a bus with honey brown interiors. For unknown reasons, we're seated at the very front of the bus so that we can see the blue eyes of our bus driver and framed photo of a God placed above him. He has what looks like the top of an "om" sign tattooed just a bit above his left eye. Seated beside him is a younger man with a beard, a whistle, and a pink turban. He has very white teeth.

The rest of the occupants of the bus come and go. There are two women with bright lipstick and pink saris. One of them tells me, through motioning, about a bee flying around my head. There is a man in a plaid shirt, openly picking his nose and staring at us. There are a few different colored turbans and a beggar boy with discolored fingernails and a tattoo on his hand. He yawns and counts the coins in his pocket. There is a woman with a white cloth draped over her head. Many of her teeth are missing and the few that are still present are more black than white. Her wrinkles are deep set on her face and her cheekbones protrude like a skeleton. She puts the veil over her face so that when she speaks the veil goes into her mouth making her lips look a mummy. The passengers come and go, but the bus driver, the whistler, and Molly and I, we're all constant.

The bus driver has decided, against all Indian odds, that we are late and that the only solution is consistent honking. And so, even when there are no other vehicles around, or when there is no way out of the traffic, he honks. The whistle man is in agreement with him and leans fully out of the door of the bus, blowing his whistle so hard that his face turns red. In this way, this is the loudest bus I have ever been on. Perhaps this is actually the nosiest experience of my life. The driver horns, the whistle blower whistles, the driver horns, then they do it in unison. I think one could hear us coming from a mile away.

There is one moment, between the horns and whistling, when the driver yells at the whistle blower, instructing him to yell at a poor truck driver who is waiting in traffic to

make a turn. The whistle blower jumps out of the bus, runs to the front window of the truck, and whistles loudly, close to the driver's face. He moves his hands like a maniac, then runs back into the bus. There's another moment when the whistler jumps out of the bus as we approach a barricade in the road. There is no stopping us, barricade or not. The whistle blower just simply drags the barricade out of the way, and sprints back into the bus and off we go. Every time he exits the bus to yell or whistle or move things out of the way, he runs with extreme urgency and importance.

It was six hours of this masquerade and my lungs still hurt from laughing, even though nobody else on the bus seemed to notice the hilarity of the scene, all that whistling and running. Further, Molly and I, having just taken four-hour bus prior, needed to pee for nearly the entire bus ride. When we arrived at a bus stop early on in the trip to pick up more passengers, we told the driver we needed to use the toilet. "No," he said. Thinking he didn't understand, we told him again that we were going to use the toilet. "No," he said, and slapped his watch as he started the bus and sped out of the station. A few hours later, we found some young boys to translate to the driver how badly we need to pee. He finally pulled over, angrily glaring at us for getting in the way of his speed. We ran through a sandy parking lot in the middle of nowhere to pee behind a building while the entire bus waited. Legitimately afraid that the bus driver would just leave us there, we peed one by one so someone could keep watch.

As we continued the drive, we saw one tractor with the top half completely lifted in the air by its heavy load of sugarcane. We saw two turban-clad men bicycling side by side with each of their hands on the other's shoulders. There was a moment when we passed a Sikh temple and the bus slowed down, though not to a full stop, and the two rushed maniacs, the driver and his turbaned accomplice, put their hands together and bowed down. A man with a long white beard came to the driver's window, jogging along side the still moving bus. He handed the driver a little bag of white sugar candies. The whistler opened the bag and gave everyone in proximity, us included, a couple of candies. It was hot and my back stuck to the leather seat the whole drive. It's good to be in India.

APRIL

The last half hour of our train to Delhi was spent drenched in the sunset, tangling through the slum to reach the train station. It was windy in the train so everyone's hair was moving around as if we were all on a roller coaster together. I leaned my head against the open window and all I could see were fields and fields of trash. Among wrappers and plastic bags, children, men, and women squatted to use the toilet. Their bodies were little splashes of color amidst all of the grey. Laundry hung from makeshift lines above the trash, moving slightly in the wind. With garbage for gardens, homes sprouted in odd shapes from the mounds of trash. Tarps were held down by terra cotta pots to make roofs. Beside a pile of burning water bottles, teenage boys played a game with a wooden mallet and a tennis ball. While their movements were obscured by the opaque smoke, I could hear their laughter flitter in through the windows.

This morning, my last morning in India, I watched the sun stretch her sleepy morning fingers across a valley of dreaming peaks. In my time here, I have come to the realization that every birdwatcher should aspire to come to India. Like pilgrims flock to the rivers of the Ganges and Yamuna, as should devotees in the art of aviation migrate to

the banks of clouds that ebb and flow through this expansive eastern sky, carrying a color wheel of feathers on their crests. The excitement of finding bright green parrots, birds disguised as flying squirrels, and storks dressed all in white, is heightened by the symphony of singsong melodies that bounce from beak to beak. I let their songs swirl in through my curious ears, circling in my belly like the pigeons that draw ovals in the sky above temples. I hope that the movement of their flight stays in me long after I leave this country.

Before heading to the airport, the sun had nearly shaken the moon fully out of her starry eyed slumber and the tenor of birds was met with the competition of an India with open eyes; open eyes and a strong set of vocal chords. Lungs that exhale honks and bells, temple chants and men with wooden carts selling green peas and ginger. It's only in these brief moments preceding the moon falling off her celestial cot and the sun untying herself from the horizon, inflating her own lungs like a diver about to plunge, only then does India allot a stillness to those who are careful enough to allow it. In this stillness the only rustle is that of feathers and the only song is that of the flock. In this stillness is the blessing of birdwatchers, the puja of wing tipped wanderers, flight followers. It is in this stillness that I hope to remember India.

DOWNTOWN SANTA ANA

By Melanie Nichole Figueroa

When women walk
down the street,
men cat call,

“Hey mami, where
are you heading?”
And on some days,

a man hands
out bible verses
and reprimands.

Clutching a worn,
sweat-covered cowboy
hat in his hands,

he chants loudly
in Spanish,
a language my father

never taught me.
I catch snippets:
sinners, repent, fire.

Words meant
for fear, but kinder
than the man who shouts

“You’re all idiots!”
at the local college.
Children, with sticky

fingers and faces
from the fruit carts,
run around their mothers’

skirts as they walk
down the brick
paths, passing

Laura’s Beauty Supplies.
In front of the courthouse,
a man lays in his truck bed,

a tarp draped over it
—a tent. Dirty feet
stick out; he wriggles

them and sips a cold can
as he listens to the sounds
of his portable radio.

Candles sit by a utility box.
Kim Pham, the sign reads:
“brutally beaten.”

I PRESENT YOU THIS DEAD BIRD AS A TOKEN OF MY LOVE

By Danielle Slay

10/23/13

Will you come over?
I feel like selling myself short.
And please make sure you leave in the middle
of the night like you always used to.
It's been too long since I've stared out of
my open door in the morning and wondered what
I could do to make you love me.
I hope you'll leave the smell of you behind,
so I can curl up next to it until
I feel like selling myself short again.

11/17/13

You leaned in so close I thought you might finally kiss me
but instead you just breathed hot air into my mouth and
said,
"Nothing good ever stays."
And I realized that no matter how many times I ran my
hands all over your skin I could never touch you.

11/24/13

When I cannot sleep at night
I read the stories you have written
all over me. The night we
made love for the first time you
scribbled one all over
my back.
How cruel of you knowing I could
Never read it myself

12/1/13

Do you remember when the house was empty and we ran
warm bath water at one in the morning? I counted the
freckles on your back and you washed my hair. We marked
the hall with our wet feet as you chased me back to bed and
I sang songs into your mouth as we made love until we were
tired enough to sleep. And there we stayed for two days and
did not let the sun tell us when to wake up. Years later I still
follow our old footprints down the hallway and into my
room where I hope to find you fast asleep.

12/23/13

One day I will warn my daughter
of the boys with wandering hands and iron hearts
who do not intend to fall in love
as she does in the backseat
of his foggy car parked on a neighborhood street

1/2/14

I need your fucking consistency. Don't you get that? I am
too weak to be loved one night and forgotten by morning.
My clothes smell like smoke and I don't know how to care
without letting it destroy me. I am a tree growing on a
highway. I have written you letters and swore I would send
them but wound up throwing them off of a bridge. They all
ended with me saying, "It is so very difficult to sleep with all
you broken arrows in my back."

1/14/14

I was staring at him from across the room.
He was looking back at me smiling.
I realized I was looking at him
because he had your jawbone,
And his eyes were blue but not as
blue as yours.
But he looked like you.
And I wanted him to be.
And it made me wonder how many times
in my life has someone looked at me
and saw someone else.
How many times they wanted someone else.

1/17/14

I saw myself as only a graveyard
And you made me believe
I could be a garden

2/6/14

You always thought you were defective but you look like a
rose to me.
You liked it when I wore my hair up because it showed the
freckles on my neck.
My mother begged me to marry a rich man but I would
sleep under a fucking bridge with you.
You used to say the lines on my hands looked like rivers,
and that sleeping on my chest brought you closer to God.
Sometimes I wonder if you still remember these little things
that occupy so much of me.
I think of you every time I see a bluebird and I always will.

2/14/14

I wanted to be a strong oak tree like my father.
But I am a weeping willow like my mother.
The boy I love is like cigarette smoke.
My lungs begin to heal until I crave him,
and breathe him in all over again.

2/18/14

All I know is that I used to
date my papers with 2008
and I snuck out of my bedroom
window at three in the morning
to sit on the curb with you.
And you choked on
“I love you.”
You could only really
say it when you thought
I was asleep.
I know that my old sandals
don't fit anymore
and my old favorite shirt
is in the trash somewhere
or on the back of someone else.

I know that I've learned
to understand my mother,
and what I used to criticize
I now appreciate.

I know that I never wanted to grow up,
But I blinked my eyes and I am
here and you are there
and some other stupid 16 year olds
are probably sitting on that stupid
curb choking on
“I love you.”



RED DAWN

By So Tauch

Richmond

By Olivia Wickstrom

I'm haunted, Richmond
remembering
the year I found my father.
Flesh and blood Richmond
He who raised me Richmond
... or didn't.

Tuesday nights
front porch
sipping corn whiskey
so cold
my teeth ache with shock.
We have "nowhere to be tomorrow"
he says.
I'm sixteen,
I have class at 8:15
don't you care Richmond?
"But will you still drive me?"

And are you frightened Richmond?
He asks me to drive
for the sake of going on a drive
laughing at me
"you're like... dog on his first car ride"
tongue flapping out the window
eyes squinting
against hot dry wind.
A truck cab
thick with his scotch scent
and my happiness.
A daughter yearning
memories.

Help, Richmond.
I hear his rocking chair outside
loud enough
to wake me
from my lucid dreams.
I knew
he was awake at 2am
stoned
and rambling
about his ex-wife,
she left him
and died.
Did I hear him crying?

Hope, Richmond
for a life better
than lukewarm TV dinners
and scalding coffee
so bitter,
it makes my stomach turn.
Cleaning, Richmond
yardwork, Richmond
it's a man's world, Richmond.

Erase it, Richmond.
Tell me i'm pretty
treat me my age
make me something to eat
visit my grandparents
come to my dance recital
take me fishing,
and can I meet your new wife?

June in Richmond.
Sticky air and the scent
of buttermilk pancakes
on fathers day.
Breakfast in bed
with a note
that reads
"from your daughter, with love."
His replies
"gone fishing."
He forgot Richmond
he fell in Richmond
he escaped Richmond.
But wasn't he hungry?

You're home Richmond.
My teacher asked
"what is your address?"
I wrote
Richmond.
Large,
in purple crayon.

I wrote you Richmond.
You raised me Richmond.

If I HAD EVEN ONE

By Derek Lamson

If I had even one
sheet of paper, I'd make a paper boat
and I would row you
up to Heaven.
On the way—how pleasant!
the cloud-fish have iridescent sides
shoals of them would leap
in the light turned up
by my oars,
and you would turn your head
from the pillow where you lay
to point and laugh

and we and the hour
would float nearer to where the golden
and ivory pillars rise
from light to light

and you would finally heal and tame all
the black and purple and endless bruise your heart
and the scar on my hand
would fade and clear and pink up

if I had even one sheet of paper
I'd make a paper boat

lightning storm

by Rebekkah Brainerd

We woke with the lightning reflecting in our eyes
And we opened the door in the face of the approaching
storm
The rumbling of jet-black clouds on our heels
As we raced to the edge of the ocean
And the stars went out
One
By
One
As fingers as black as hell
Caught their light in its grasp
Hurling them into the seething and retching waves
And when I looked at you
Lightning flashed

And your outline was imprinted on my soul
And I knew
Both of our eyes glowed
With the same light

And when we streaked back to our house
Darkness swallowed the world
And you fell asleep with your ear against my heart
Your body nestling somewhere in my soul
As the world crashed together



ABSTRACT #2

By Carrie Clore

Contributors

Rebekkah Brainerd is a graduating senior studying Political Science and Economics. She has been writing novels, short stories, and poems since her early teens, and has recently been working towards professional publication.

Maya Brown is an Oregon born writer who hails from a tiny town called Zig Zag in the foothills of Mt. Hood. She has written, directed, and starred in plays for the local theater company, *Monkey with a Hat On*. She received her bachelors degree in English from Portland State University in June of 2014 and plans to focus on poetry and memory-based writing.

Carrie Clore is a self-described word junkie who recently discovered the bliss of poetry writing. As of spring 2014, Carrie will receive a BFA in Art Practices with a writing minor at PSU. She is an interdisciplinary artist working in the mediums of sculpture, printmaking, and painting. Her drawings, prints, paintings, and poetry have been featured in *Pathos*.

Grant Howard is a naval-gazer, author of "An Open Asylum", an alcoholic, recreational pill-popper, sex-addict, self-loathing-cliche of a "poet". An average writer. Was born in Portland. Will probably die in Portland, thinks himself-above-grammar and looks forward to paying off student loans for the rest of his starving life. He also likes long walks on Burnside, contemplating his future.

Derek Lamson was raised in Oregon and first published in 1976. He's a little cracked about Jesus but otherwise fairly normal: raised two sons in Portland, travelled and campaigned for peace and social justice, and is a respected songwriter (performing in finer Quaker living rooms everywhere). He returned to school in 2009 and graduates this summer from PSU with an MEd.

Thea Prieto studied creative writing at the University of California, Berkeley, and is currently pursuing her MFA in fiction writing at PSU. Her work has been published in *Cal Literature & Arts Magazine* and featured in The Good Men Project's online journal *The Good Life*.

Jazmine Mira Rosier once told an Indian Guru that her purpose was to wander. The Guru laughed, but she continued to roam. She picks up words scattered along faraway roads and tries her best to wrangle them into something wonderful or weird. She is 23 and lives in Portland, Oregon with her cat that drools too much. Her favorite word is phantasmagoria.

Heidi Sellick has always enjoyed the inspiration of writing over the task of editing, believing that editing is a destructive rather than constructive process. Although Heidi has never been trained formally, she enjoys writing and critiquing poetry. Her poem "Maybe They're Made That Way" was published in PCC's *Alchemy* literary magazine. She will graduate this spring with a minor in writing.

Danielle Slay is a super weird girl who just recently moved across the country to attend PSU. She likes dogs and open windows and she writes poetry because she enjoys it so much and she hopes others enjoy it too.

So Tauch is a self-taught freelance photographer, specializing in landscape, urban, and product photography. So Tauch continues to build his portfolio by experimenting with various photography techniques including high dynamic range, long exposure, and infrared. His work has been recently featured in Smithsonian's "Oregon Rugged Landscape" article. In his spare time, he enjoys drawing, biking, running and drinking coffee.

Stephanie Tshappat is a senior graduating from PSU's Urban Honors College, majoring in English and minoring in writing. She has written for the *Vanguard* and was a junior research editor with the Honor College's research journal, *Anthos*. "Logging Country" is a 1,000 word flash fiction piece she wrote to include with her Honors creative thesis project, "Magnolia". She lives in the Portland area with her son and their 100 pound malamute-lab mix.

Olivia Wickstrom is a sophomore at PSU, transplanted from California two years ago. She will be traveling to Scotland in the fall of 2014 to travel, study, and work. Writing is her passion, though she secretly dreams of becoming a yoga instructor (I guess the secret is out now).

Other contributors to this edition of *Pathos* were **Melanie Nichole Figueroa** and **Chad White**. For a full list of past contributors, please visit pathoslitmag.com.

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